

PER BV 2580 .R44 v.33-63

Neglected Arabia



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2015

LIBRARY OF PRINCETON
* JUL 11 1904 *
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Neglected Arabia



Missionary Letters and News

published quarterly by

THE ARABIAN MISSION



Number Forty-Nine, January—March, 1904

CONTENTS

The Spiritual Poverty of Islam	- -	Rev. S. M. Zwemer, D.D.
Kuweit Occupied	- - - - -	“ “ “
Work at Muscat	- - - - -	Rev. James E. Moerdyk
How a Shiah Young Man Found Christ		
To the Supporters of Beds in the Mason Memorial Hospital, and others interest- ed in the Hospital Work	- - - -	Mrs. S. M. Zwemer

THE ARABIAN MISSION

TRUSTEES.

Rev. M. H. Hutton, D. D.,
“ J. P. Searle, D. D.,
“ John G. Fagg, D. D.,
Rev. C. L. Wells, D. D.,
“ Lewis Francis, D. D.,
Mr. E. E. Olcott
Mr. John Bingham.

OFFICERS FOR 1903-1904.

Rev. M. H. Hutton, D. D., *President.*
“ J. P. Searle, D. D., *Vice-President.*
“ C. L. Wells, D. D., *Recording Secretary.*
“ Henry N. Cobb, D. D., *Cor. Sec.*, 25 East 22d Street, N. Y.
Mr. Chas. H. Harris, *Treas.*, 25 East 22d Street, N. Y.
Rev. J. L. Amerman, D. D., *Asst. Treas.*, 25 East 22d Street, N. Y.
“ John W. Conklin, *Field Sec.*, 25 East 22d Street, N. Y.

HONORARY TRUSTEES.

Thomas Russell, Esq., Montclair, N. J.
W. A. Buchanan, Esq., London, England.

MISSIONARIES.

Rev. James Cantine On Furlough.
Rev. and Mr. Samuel M. Zwemer, D.D Bahrein, Persian Gulf.
Dr. and Mrs. H. R. L. Worrall Busrah, Persian Gulf.
Rev. and Mrs. Fred. J. Barny Busrah, Persian Gulf.
Dr. and Mrs. Sharon J. Thoms On Furlough.
Rev. James E. Moerdyk Muscat, Arabia.
Rev. John Van Ess Busrah Persian Gulf.
Miss Elizabeth G. De Pree Bahrein, Persian Gulf.
Miss J. A. Scardefield Busrah, Persian Gulf.
Miss Fanny Lutton Busrah, Persian Gulf.
*Miss Lucy M. Patterson, M.D Bahrein, Persian Gulf.

Address all letters, etc., to missionaries in the field, “*Via Bombay.*”

Please draw checks and send remittances or requests for information to
“THE ARABIAN MISSION,” 25 East 22nd. St. New York City.

*Temporary appointment.

Missionary Letters and News from Arabia

January—March, 1904

THE SPIRITUAL POVERTY OF ISLAM.

A Plea for the Mohammedan World.

By S. M. Zwemer, D.D., F.R.G.S., Bahrein, Arabia.

(From *The Intercollegian*.)

A strong plea for the evangelization of the Mohammedan world could be made based on the vast extent of Islam and the nearly two hundred millions of people it embraces. Or one could plead the danger that Christianity incurs from so aggressive a foe, or point to the unprecedented and unaccountable neglect on the part of the Church to evangelize the Moslem masses even in the past century of missions. One could plead the marvelous opportunities for missions to Moslems opened by the progress of Christian civilization and conquest. But the strongest plea, and one that will touch the man qualified to respond to it—the man who is spiritually-minded—is that based on the woful spiritual condition of the Mohammedan world. Look at it in bare outline.

I. *The Moslem idea of God and of Jesus Christ is defective, distorted and degrading.* There is no deity but Allah. To study His character you must read Palgrave.* Absolute sovereignty, ruthless omnipotence and caprice are his attributes. Hell must be filled, the Koran says, and so Allah creates infidels. Allah is not bound by any standard of justice. Yet we are told that "Islam is the handmaid of Christianity." Here is a summary of what orthodox Moslems believe concerning the Christ. He was miraculously born of the Virgin Mary; performed puerile miracles; was an apostle of God strengthened by the Holy Spirit, i.e., Gabriel; he foretold the advent of Mohammed as Paraclete; the Jews intended to crucify Him, but God deceived them and Judas was slain in His stead. He is now in one of the inferior stages of celestial bliss; he will come again at the last day, will slay Antichrist, kill all swine, break the Cross, and remove the poll-tax from the infidels. He will reign justly for forty-five years, marry

* "Trav. in Arabia," vol. i, pp. 365-370.

and have children, and be buried in a grave ready for him at Medina, next to Mohammed. What a caricature!

Islam denies the incarnation and the atonement. With all the good names and titles it gives our Savior, Islam only proves itself the Judas Iscariot among false religions by betraying the Son of Man with a kiss. To the Moslem Christ is neither a priest nor a king.

II *The Moslem Ideal of character and its result.* Every religion has its ideals and seldom rises above them. All pious Moslems consider their prophet as the ideal of perfection and the model of conduct. To be perfect is to be like Mohammed. The awful sin and guilt of the Mohammedan world is that it gives Christ's glory to another. All the prophets that came before are supplanted. In the Koran Mohammed is human; tradition has made him sinless and almost divine. He is called Light of God, Peace of the World, and First of all Creatures. What history calls the faults of Mohammed's character Moslems consider his perfections or privileges, e.g., polygamy, cruelty toward his enemies, and treachery. An Arabian genius-reformer who was ambitious, ignorant, superstitious, and sensual, and who did not scruple to break every precept of the moral law, has become the ideal of character in a great world-religion. Could any fact be more pitiful when we think of the young men in Moslem lands?

A stream cannot rise higher than its source. Except for Christian influences, slavery exists in all Moslem lands. Polygamy, concubinage, and divorce are common. The millions of Shiah Moslems add to these the abomination of "temporary marriages," based on the teaching of the Koran. The conscience is petrified. Fatalism has paralyzed progress. Injustice is stoically accepted. No man bears another's burden and there is no public spirit. Lying is a fine art in Persia and robbery a science in Arabia. Treachery and murder are the steps to petty thrones in free Arabia, and in Turkey justice is sold to the highest bidder. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Islam has been tried in Arabia—unadulterated and uninterrupted—for thirteen centuries, and has piteously failed. Is it not time to give the Gospel a chance?

III. *The Spirit of God moves upon the waters, although darkness still covers the deep.* Educated Moslems in India are trying to whitewash their prophet and his book by a species of higher criticism. Two learned Mohammedans there prepared a commentary on the Bible from a Moslem standpoint. At Lahore they are printing parodies of Christian songs for spiritual food. The increase of Bible circulation in all Moslem lands is astonishing. The word of God has been translated into nearly every Moslem tongue, so that while the Arabic Koran is a sealed book to millions, the Bible speaks the language of the home and the market. The press of India and Egypt testify that Islam is on the defense even now. The Moslem apologist has abandoned positions, within the last decade, which were once thought impregnable. There is thirst for spiritual truth—witness the growth of the Babi-movement and the New Islam in India. Moslems are beginning to see that in religion, as in mathematics, there is only one straight line between two points; all other lines are crooked. Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation between a Holy God and a helpless sinner.

If you believe that, come and help conquer the Mohammedan world for Christ. There are deserters coming in every day from the enemy's camp, and we are looking forward to their unconditional surrender if reinforcements do not fail us.

KUWEIT OCCUPIED.

Rev. S. M. Zwemer, D.D.

In the Christian Intelligencer of July 30, 1902, I wrote some account of Kuwait, the latest British protectorate in Arabia. Since that time our mission has by God's blessing been enabled to open definite work there, and at our last annual meeting it was decided that Kuwait be an out-station of Bahrein. Altho the place is much nearer to Busrah the communications are more frequent and easier from this port by the mail steamers.

On February 14th I left Bahrein by steamer for a short visit

to encourage our colporter and to learn of the present prospects for mission work at Kuwait. It was good to be welcomed by Salome Antoon on board the ship, and instead of having to look for quarters to be led to "our own hired house" which we have rented for a year by permission of the chief. Salome Antoon is a Mosul Christian, trained in the C. M. S. mission at Bagdad, and who has had ten years experience as a colporter, first under our mission and later under the British and Foreign Bible Society.

The five healthy, happy children of Salome and their mother soon made me feel at home. The house has three lower rooms and a cool roof with a good exposure for the summer. As Kuwait has a much drier climate than Bahrein or Busrah, we anticipate no interference with work on the score of health. I was very comfortable during my stay and could not help feeling how the silent influence of such a christian home must tell on the Moslem families in the neighborhood.

Visitors frequent the house, and I had two interesting conversations with a Jewish rabbi. He was well acquainted with the New Testament and admitted that Jesus of Nazareth was a great and holy teacher, but would not admit that He was the Messiah of prophecy. Another visitor was an old friend whom I had met at Bagdad several years before. He was a Moslem mystic, a Sufi and, as many of the Mohammedans in Eastern Arabia profess to belong to this sect or philosophy, it is worth while noting their opinions. They are Mohammedan Pantheists. God only exists, and all visible and invisible things are only an emanation from Him. Religions are matters of indifference; the real thing is spiritual union with God. Human life is likened to a journey, and the seeker after God is a traveller. The four stages of life's journey are called in Arabic by names that signify humanity, the kingdom, power and extinction, or absorption into Deity. My friend claimed he had reached the fourth stage. He said I am the Messiah and the Messiah is in me! We talked of the nature of sin and of redemption, but to the Sufi there is really no guilt in the idea of sin, it is only a weakness of the soul not yet absorbed into the all-soul of God.

Our Bible-shop at Kuwait is in a splendid location near the main bazaar and opposite to the principal mosque. Two motto-texts in Arabic tell the passer-by that "With God all things are possible," and that "In God we put our trust." I found these beautiful words among the Koran-texts which a Persian shop-keeper kept on sale in gilt frames, and put them up. Our stock of books was replenished but must be further increased. There seems to be a call for educational books and stationery. Bible sales have been good, and our colporter has managed to do a great deal of canvassing without awakening much opposition. It is always a difficult and delicate matter to gain a foothold in a Moslem town, and Kuwait has not been an exception. Altho under British protection the Sheikh is very independent of everything save public opinion in the mosque. And it is due to the tact and courtesy of Salome himself that he was permitted to open a Christian book-shop in spite of the patent fact that this was to be the opening wedge for other work.

I had the pleasure of two interviews with the Sheikh, and was glad to hear good opinions of our man after his stay of nearly six months. My stay was brief as I only came to inspect the work and the present situation. But by stirring around one can learn much in the space of four days. The population is evidently increasing; a French merchant estimates the total population at 25,000. The bazaar has grown larger and is better supplied than it was two years ago. Instead of the mixed Persian-Turkish coins the Rupee and the Indian "copper" rule. A week before I came the Sheikh had introduced Rs. 20,000 worth of Indian pice,—preparatory, I was told to the opening of an Indian post-office. An officer of the British India Steam Navigation Co. was placing buoys in the harbor to facilitate commerce, and the custom-house was full of wares. A Bagdad travelling-dentist was fitting the ruler of Kuwait with a new set of teeth, and his reception room (which I have described before) now has portraits of King Edward VII. and the Queen.

All these straws show that the wind still blows from the south and that we make no mistake if we lay foundations here for work

in the future. There was not so much talk of the railway as formerly, but the merchants expect a speedier and richer harvest of trade with Nejd when peace is restored and the caravan-routes are again opened. How long the railway will be delayed is an open question; but that it will come some day is certain.

There are no steamers from Kuwait direct to Bahrein, and I hoped to save time and money by returning in a native boat. On Saturday, February 20th, I embarked. It was only a small craft loaded with sheep and goats, but as the wind was favorable we ventured. The first day we made fine progress along the Hassa-coast. Then calms and head winds delayed us. We put into a small harbor, at the island Janna, the only settlement on all this inhospitable coast, and waited two days for the sheep to graze and drink and the wind to veer around to the North. I met the people of the place, representing some eighty souls, and left a few gospels. The settlement was once large and there are still date-groves; now it is only a frontier-post of the Turks in the lawless Bedouin country.

When the wind turned northwest it was a squall and our careful captain would not weigh anchor. Finally we sailed and on the ninth day after leaving Kuwait reached Bahrein harbor. The nine long days were not monotonous. As fellow-passengers there were: a dervish from Cairo, another from Medina, a Shiah merchant from Amara, two Persian lads, and a Bedouin shepherd in charge of the one hundred and forty sheep. The latter was a Wahabi of the strictest sect, but I think he became almost a liberal Moslem by the end of the journey. If it had not been for the insect population of the dervish's mantle, he and I would have been close friends. As it was we slept on the same side of the deck, shared victuals and arguments, and he is now a guest in the mission-house (lower floor) for a few days. It was sad to hear him confess that altho he had wandered years in Egypt and had crossed the Turkish empire he had never yet heard the gospel explained by a Christian.

WORK AT MUSCAT.

Rev. James E. Moerdyk.

Work in Muscat has its ups and downs. Colporters' work has been good thus far. One of the men has been out on a thirty days' tour in Sur and that district south from here. He reports that it is a wild country and wild people. His work was successful and encouraging. He sold 298 Scriptures. To-day two of the men are off on a tour along the coast north and west from here.

I have two classes of young men who come to me for instruction in English. They are not as regular as I should like, but it gives me an opportunity to get at them. For two weeks past we had the happy experience of meeting an Arab from Kuwait, who came inquiring after the way of life. I found him very intelligent and very earnest. I believe him to be honest and he now seems happy in Christ as his Savior. He has attended our Sunday services regularly, and daily prayers as his work afforded the time. His evenings were generally spent in the home of the colporters and away from his former companions in sin. He is now on his way back to Kuwait intending to finish his business there and then begin over where he will have religious liberty. He thinks of trying Bahrein, but will not settle in Muscat because of its debilitating climate.

There are two others in the place who are reading the Bible, and I sometimes have happy conversations with them.

A disappointment has come to me in the person of the lad sent me from Busrah by Mr. Barny. Mr. Barny sent him down because he applied for religious instruction, and because he could not stay there threatened by his father and brother. I received him kindly, helped him to work here, and gave him daily instruction in reading and in Bible truths. But he has turned out a deceiver. Lying, cheating, drinking and visiting bad women have all been proved conclusively. He would leave my house at midnight when all were asleep and spend the time in wicked carousing. I have sent him back to Busrah.

HOW A SHIAH YOUNG MAN FOUND CHRIST.

Last year a young man came to Bahrein from Bushire, directed to us by a former pupil in our English school. He wrote two letters in English shortly after his arrival, which I reproduce in their quaint form: Letter No. 1. "Dear Sir. This is all about my state. My name is G— and my father A. N. My age is twenty-six years. At first I have been Mohammedan religious, but now I am a Christian. Because I have seen the Christ in my dream when I have been ten years old. I **have** taken the religion on my heart and not for anything else. (**He** had no motive save the search for truth, leaving home and property. His father is well-to-do.) I hope to be a certain Christian. Believe me, Sir, yours faithfully and humble. G.—"

Letter No. 2. This came a few days later.

"Dear Sir. Received your honest letter and I understood the contents. You me inform about the Bible. I never saw it but only hear about it. As I have wrote you, please guide me in the Holy Religion. I am very happy to want to be a Christian. Since my childhood dream I kept the love on Him. . . . Send me any book of guidance and a Bible please.

Yours faithfully, G—"

Six months have passed since these letters were written. He often came to see us at night. His friends burned his books more than once, threatened him, and persecuted him in many trying way, altho not openly. He showed a most forgiving spirit. Finally matters came to such a state that he had to flee. These short letters from a C. M. S. missionary at H—, India, tell the rest of the story :

Jan. 23, 1904.

"Dear Mr. Zwemer.—G— arrived here from Bombay on January 3rd. We like him and believe he is a sincere inquirer. Yesterday the son of his brother's agent came here, having recognized him in the city. But Abdul Messia seems firmly determined not to go

back with him to Bombay. He is a diligent Bible student in English and Persian, and has made some useful friends. He was in tears a few days ago over a dream in which he imagined his sister had died. We are trying to make him feel at home with us. I am glad of this link with your field of labor. Yours in Christ's service,

“M. G. G.—”

March 5, 1904.

Dear Mr. Zwemer.—G.— was baptised last Sunday as Abdul Masih before a little congregation of sympathizers at St. George's Church. He continues steady and very studious of his Bible. I hope some day he will develop into a useful helper to us here, as he shows a hearty, humble spirit and is anxious to learn. Hitherto there has been practically no persecution though some enemies are prowling about.

Yours sincerely,

M. G. G.—

**TO THE SUPPORTERS OF BEDS IN THE MASON
MEMORIAL HOSPITAL AND OTHERS INTERESTED
IN THE HOSPITAL WORK.**

Mrs. S. M. Zwemer.

Dear Friends:—

When anyone has stock in a railway, that railway is intensely interesting, and the daily record of the traffic is noted and pondered over by the shareholder. How much more do the friends, who support beds and the work of the hospital, watch for all news concerning the progress of the work and of their special bed. Arab patients, like all other human beings, differ widely in interest, in their sicknesses and personality. Patients have come here from long distances, from the distant villages of the island, from the mainland, and also from Persia. One woman with a very bad knee, came from a place called Kongun, in Persia, because she had heard that there were doctors and a hospital in Bahrein! The

patients, about whom I want to tell you, have occupied the beds the first three months of this year; those who are in the beds now I shall have to leave for a future time. The beds are all full now, and many of the cases are most interesting.

“S. Y. Lansing Bed.” A Hindoo sailor from one of the mail ships was hurt by the crane, and he was sent ashore here because the Captain feared that gangrene was developing. The crushed fingers healed up finally under Jan Khan’s treatment, and he was ready to join his ship on its return to Bahrein.

“Van Santwood Bed” was occupied for two months by one of the Muscat helpers. He was in a run down condition from Chronic Indigestion, and improved very considerably while here, and was a help in speaking to the patients in the wards and dispensary, and had many interesting conversations with those who visited the hospital, while he himself was encouraged by meeting so many, who seemed to be improved by the Gospel.

“Shamrock Bed.” A very important man—a Mullah i.e., a Pastor in the Mosque of the ruler of the island was in this bed; he had a small operation on his eyes. He was willing to read the books bearing on Christianity, and we trust that his stay in the hospital may help to break down some of his fanaticism and ignorance. If this man came into the light and followed it, he would lead many of those whom now he is leading in darkness. “All things are possible with God.” Pray for all this class to which he belongs!

“Henry De Pree.” A boy about seventeen from the village of Sitrah was in this bed for a time; he was in a very run-down condition for several reasons, but would not stay in bed and rest, and everything was so new and strange to him that he ran all over the building and grounds to see everything. In his village the people are fanatical and ignorant, and the women shy of strangers. Perhaps the kindness he received and the words he heard preached daily, may help him to understand why strangers cared enough for him to treat him kindly!

“Margaret Bishop.” A man had a double operation for in-

verted eyelids, and his eyes and sight improved and probably his sight will be preserved him for some time longer. We trust that he, with many others, may be enlightened to see spiritually.

“Talitha Cumi.” A young woman, who had just returned from a journey down the Gulf, was in this bed. She was in a very sick and weak condition after child birth; her child had been born on the boat, and of course she had had no sort of care. She was much benefitted by the treatment, but her husband would not allow her to stay long, so she left before she was cured. She listened attentively while we spoke to her about the Great Physician, and made no objection when we prayed for her in the name of Christ. She was able to read, so we hope the seed of the Word may remain with her.

“Ward Memorial.” One patient in this bed was such a nice old fellow; he was much pleased with the operation done for him, and was cured of his disease. He gave us a cordial invitation to visit his home in Bedai, which we accepted after a few weeks, and our visit was very encouraging. We saw quite a number of patients and had abundant opportunity for reading and witnessing in his home.

Another old man in this bed had a large tumor removed from his side. Dr. Patterson’s first case in Arabia; it has been quite a success and a wonder, and we expect that the case will help on the work in Kuwait and Nejd.

“James Graham Memorial.” An interesting case—also from Bedai—he had a contracted hand, the fingers bent right into the palm; he was chloroformed and the hand straightened. He seemed pleased with what was done for him; and he had opportunity of hearing the Gospel preached daily. You must pray that the Word will not return void.

“Mizpah.” A very sad case was here a few weeks ago; a man in a weak condition was received as an inpatient and it was found that he was suffering from tuberculosis, and was in the last stage. He seemed to be so convinced of the truth of the gospel teaching while in the hospital, that before he left he professed his faith in Christ; as far as he had the light, he believed.

“Knox Memorial.” A man from Bahrein came one day complaining of very severe pain which turned out to be severe colic; he left cured after a few days. Quick relief often makes a deep impression. And this man will be able to witness that the hospital is a good place, where only good is heard and done.

“Sharpley Memorial.” A Nejd man occupied this bed; he came for an operation on his eyelids, and was relieved and seemed grateful for the attention and care given him.

“Helen Graham Farrar.” Another man from Nejd, a bright looking fellow, who seems to have more intelligence than the usual run. He is suffering from a badly swollen leg with several ugly looking ulcers, but is slowly improving and enjoys his cool, clean, comfortable bed, and is thankful for kindness shown to him; he, with the other inpatients, show much interest in the preaching service and prayer.

“Fanny Witherspoon Mason.” The present patient is a man who was caught stealing and the punishment prescribed by the Koran was meted out to him, i.e., chopping off the right hand. This is done in a most barbarous manner, and the stump is plunged into hot tar. The man looked very ill when he came to the hospital and seemed duly impressed by his wickedness, and said that his punishment was just, so wicked had he been, and he professed to have repented, but that will be shown by his after life. The hand is getting along nicely; the doctor thinks it will need a few grafts. We hope the truth may make him free from sin.

“Peter Zwemer Memorial.” A man from Debai on the Oman coast occupied this bed for a few weeks, he had rather a bad sinus of the right side, which would not answer to treatment, so it was opened up under chloroform, and what was thought at first to be necrosed bone turned out to be crystals of oxide of iron and copper; these are found near where the patient lives and they had been inserted by his loving friends to effect a cure! The opening was washed and drained, and a fortnight after, he was dismissed cured. He is a bright man and a great reader, and while in the hospital, he read portions of the Bible and several controversial

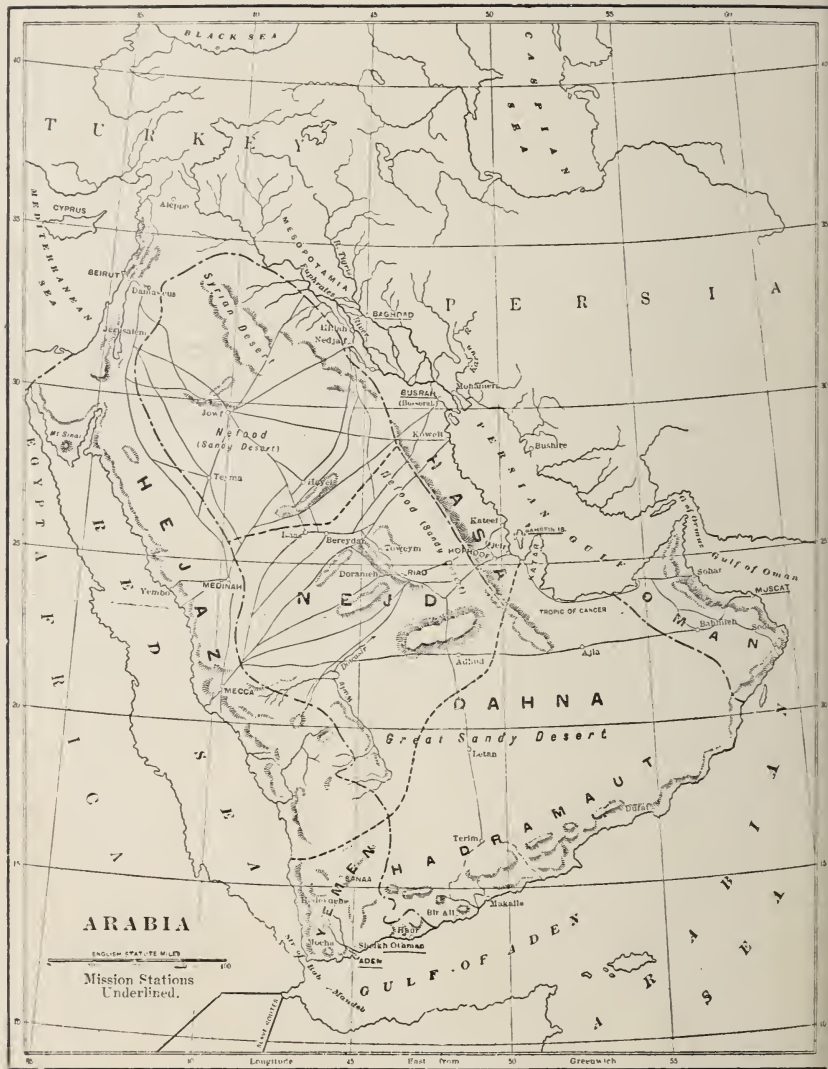
books, and seemed to imbibe a good deal of the truth; he has taken the books with him, and we must follow him with prayer, that what he has heard may not pass from him!

“First Church Holland.” A poor Persian, who has very bad ulcers on his leg, is in this bed; he speaks Arabic and so is able to understand the reading and seems quite interested, and when he returns to his country he may be the means of telling others about the hospital and what he heard there.

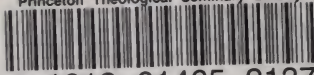
“W. De Pree.” A woman came who was very sick and weak, and with much persuasion we got her to remain; she made a good recovery and was rather sorry to leave. She liked to have the Gospel read, and tried to understand, and said she believed in Christ.

This has grown to a greater length than I intended that it should and yet I have not nearly finished. We are glad to have our new doctor; she has been kept quite busy since she came, and has entered into the work with interest, common sense and skill.





Princeton Theological Seminary Library



1 1012 01465 2137

FOR USE IN LIBRARY ONLY
PERIODICALS

III

The man in library coats

